

**PATENT APPLICATION**

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re the Application of

Atsushi NAGAHARA

Application No.: New U.S. Patent Application

Filed: December 27, 2001

Docket No.: 111583

For: DEBT DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM, BILLING SYSTEM, DEBT DISTRIBUTION  
METHOD, AND STORAGE MEDIUM, FOR USE IN A CONTENT DISTRIBUTION  
SERVICE

**PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT**

Director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office  
Washington, D. C. 20231

Sir:

Prior to initial examination, please amend the above-identified application as follows:

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please replace claims 6-10 as follows:

6. (Amended) A billing system for use in a content distribution service

according to Claim 4, further comprising

fee calculation means for calculating the fee on the basis of the digital-content-  
fee information corresponding to the digital content selected by the content selection means;

and

discount value calculation means for calculating the discount value on the  
basis of the discount value information corresponding to the additional information selected  
by the additional-information selection means,

wherein the content selection means selects the digital content such that the fee calculated on the basis of the digital-content-fee information corresponding to the digital content to be selected by the content selection means does not become greater than the sum of the maximum value indicated by the distribution-manner information and the discount value calculated by the discount value calculation means, and

the additional-information selection means selects the additional information such that the fee calculated by the fee calculation means does not exceed the sum of the maximum value indicated by the distribution-manner information and the discount value calculated on the basis of the discount value information corresponding to the additional information to be selected by the additional-information selection means.

7. (Amended) A billing system for use in a content distribution service according to Claim 3, wherein

the distribution-manner information is information indicating a selection condition in terms of the additional information designated by the user,

the additional-information selection means selects additional information that meets the selection condition indicated by the distribution-manner information, and

the fee distribution means determines the payment value to be paid by the user by subtracting the discount value calculated on the basis of the discount value information corresponding to the additional information selected by the additional-information selection means from the fee calculated on the basis of the digital-content-fee information corresponding to the digital content selected by the digital content selection means.

8. (Amended) A billing system for use in a content distribution service according to Claim 3, wherein

the distribution-manner information is information indicating a digital content selection condition specified by the user,

the content selection means selects a digital content that meets the selection condition indicated by the distribution-manner information, and

the fee distribution means determines the payment value to be paid by the user by subtracting the discount value calculated on the basis of the discount value information corresponding to the additional information selected by the additional-information selection means from the fee calculated on the basis of the digital-content-fee information corresponding to the digital content selected by the digital content selection means.

9. (Amended) A billing system for use in a content distribution service according to Claim 2, further comprising

user information storage means for storing user information associated with a user, and

content layout means for determining an output layout of the digital content linked to the additional information, in accordance with the user information stored in the user information storage means, and laying out the digital content in accordance with the determined output layout,

wherein the content distribution means transmits a digital content laid out by the layout means to the user.

10. (Amended) A billing system for use in a content distribution service according to Claim 2, further comprising distribution-result providing means for providing a distribution result made by the fee distribution means to the user.

REMARKS

Claims 1-13 are pending. By this Preliminary Amendment, claims 6-10 are amended to eliminate multiple dependencies. Prompt and favorable examination on the merits is respectfully requested.

The attached Appendix includes marked-up copies of each rewritten claim (37 C.F.R. §1.121(c)(1)(ii)).

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment: Appendix

Date: December 27, 2001

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## APPENDIX

## Changes to Claims:

The following are marked-up version of the amended claims:

6. (Amended) A billing system for use in a content distribution service

according to Claim 4 or 5, further comprising

fee calculation means for calculating the fee on the basis of the digital-content-fee information corresponding to the digital content selected by the content selection means;  
and

discount value calculation means for calculating the discount value on the basis of the discount value information corresponding to the additional information selected by the additional-information selection means,

wherein the content selection means selects the digital content such that the fee calculated on the basis of the digital-content-fee information corresponding to the digital content to be selected by the content selection means does not become greater than the sum of the maximum value indicated by the distribution-manner information and the discount value calculated by the discount value calculation means, and

the additional-information selection means selects the additional information such that the fee calculated by the fee calculation means does not exceed the sum of the maximum value indicated by the distribution-manner information and the discount value calculated on the basis of the discount value information corresponding to the additional information to be selected by the additional-information selection means.

7. (Amended) A billing system for use in a content distribution service

according to Claim 3 one of Claims 3 to 6, wherein

the distribution-manner information is information indicating a selection condition in terms of the additional information designated by the user,

the additional-information selection means selects additional information that meets the selection condition indicated by the distribution-manner information, and

the fee distribution means determines the payment value to be paid by the user by subtracting the discount value calculated on the basis of the discount value information corresponding to the additional information selected by the additional-information selection means from the fee calculated on the basis of the digital-content-fee information corresponding to the digital content selected by the digital content selection means.

8. (Amended) A billing system for use in a content distribution service according to Claim 3 ~~one of Claims 3 to 7~~, wherein

the distribution-manner information is information indicating a digital content selection condition specified by the user,

the content selection means selects a digital content that meets the selection condition indicated by the distribution-manner information, and

the fee distribution means determines the payment value to be paid by the user by subtracting the discount value calculated on the basis of the discount value information corresponding to the additional information selected by the additional-information selection means from the fee calculated on the basis of the digital-content-fee information corresponding to the digital content selected by the digital content selection means.

9. (Amended) A billing system for use in a content distribution service according to Claim 2 ~~one of Claims 2 to 8~~, further comprising

user information storage means for storing user information associated with a user, and

content layout means for determining an output layout of the digital content linked to the additional information, in accordance with the user information stored in the

user information storage means, and laying out the digital content in accordance with the determined output layout,

wherein the content distribution means transmits a digital content laid out by the layout means to the user.

10. (Amended) A billing system for use in a content distribution service according Claim 2 to one of Claims 2 to 9, further comprising distribution-result providing means for providing a distribution result made by the fee distribution means to the user.